

**VA****U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs**

# **News Release**

Office of Public Affairs  
Media RelationsWashington, DC 20420  
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[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 26, 1998

*Washington, DC* -- More than 300 disabled veterans will participate in the 12th National Winter Sports Clinic, an event sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Disabled American Veterans (DAV). The learn-to-ski clinic will be held at Crested Butte Mountain Resort in Colorado March 22-27.

The Clinic, hosted by the Grand Junction, Colo., VA Medical Center, is open to all U.S. military veterans with spinal-cord injury or disease, certain neurological conditions, orthopedic mputations, visual impairments or other disabilities. Participants will learn adaptive Alpine and Nordic skiing, and be introduced to a variety of adaptive activities and sports including wheelchair basketball, scuba diving, self-defense and snowmobiling.

"Recreation therapy plays a key role in the rehabilitation of disabled veterans in VA medical centers throughout the country," said Togo D. West, Jr., Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "This Clinic is a showcase for that therapy. It has had a profound impact on the lives of disabled veterans of all generations."

"Rest assured, this is not easy," said DAV National Commander Harry R. McDonald. "Most of these veterans have never skied before. Most have spent months in hospitals, convinced their lives are over. A great many have been told they would never walk again. Yet here they are in the majestic high Alpine terrain of the Colorado Rockies learning how to ski. This event is proof that extraordinary things can be achieved when you're prepared to scale mountains to achieve your goal."

"These veterans just want to be normal, to do normal things," said Sandy Trombetta, director of the Clinic. "On the mountain, they become just like everybody else. It empowers them to determine their own fate. It is an intense week that touches everyone involved."

VA is a recognized leader in rehabilitation, with recreational therapy programs at each of its 173 medical centers. DAV is a nonprofit, Congressionally chartered veterans service organization with a membership of more than one million war-time disabled veterans.

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